

Powerful prayers

Navigating through experiences that we have never experienced is difficult. On last Wednesday morning I had no idea what life would be like for our nation and the world today. Last Wednesday morning I was sitting in a board meeting all morning at Kimray. Our greatest concern at that time was the falling oil prices that shocked us all on Monday.

As I sat in that very serious board meeting, I had some invasive thoughts that I had to jot down on my pad that had nothing to do with the future of Kimray.

I believe now that God was speaking to me because He knew what was about to happen Wednesday evening.

It is natural for us to think about our families first when our world is going through a difficult experience. To think first about our family comes from God. We are created in His image. (Genesis 1).

To understand God, we need to understand that the church is God's family.

- He calls His church His bride. (2 Cor. 11:2)
- He calls His church His children. (John 1:12)
- He calls Himself our Father. (Matthew 6:9)

The church is His people, His family!

A friend of mine who deeply loves His children bought a large section of land right in the middle of city where he lives. He then built a number of homes for his children and grandchildren to live in. A Father who loves His family wants them to live near him.

Our heavenly Father says He is building for us a dwelling place in heaven so we can be with Him forever.

[John 14:1-3](#)

1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

[NKJV](#)

There He will provide everything we need. He will protect us from all evil. He will heal all our wounds. He will remove all our sorrows. He will always be with us.

The church is God's family. He is going to take care of us.

Like any good Father, God hates to watch us go through difficult times in what remains of our time here on earth. It grieves Him to watch us suffer. He understands that it is necessary for a season. But He is looking forward to that time when this season of suffering will be over for us. I want to assure you that there is no one who wants our suffering to be over more than our heavenly Father.

Rev 7:14-17

14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So, he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore they are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.

16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;

17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

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Until then, He wants us to trust Him. He wants us to believe that this world is not our home; that we are citizens of His kingdom; that our suffering will give way to His glory.

As we suffer, He wants for His children what every good father just loves to see from His children. He wants us to love one another.

John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

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It brings God incredible joy to watch His children love one another. It grieves Him when we don't.

As a Pastor called by God, I have the responsibility of leading the church and equipping the church to love one another.

I cannot do it all by myself. Our staff cannot do it all by ourselves. Our elders and deacons cannot accomplish this all by themselves.

Loving one another in a way that brings joy to our heavenly Father requires all of us to cooperate with Him.

To love one another we must understand what we all need.

- We need relationship with our family.
- We need physical help from our family.
- We need encouragement to our faith from our family.

- We need support for our mission from our family.

This love is what any good father would do for his family. It is who God is to us as our Father. It is what He wants us to be to one another as His family.

Over the years the leaders of our church have developed all kinds of ministries to meet these needs in God's family. These ministries have served the needs of God's family in incredible ways.

But what God said to me last Wednesday morning in that board meeting when I had no idea what was going to happen that night is this. He said to me....

“My church can exist and thrive if it's only meetings are small groups meeting in homes.”

He said to me the ministry of meeting in homes is the only essential ministry in His church.

This is not a new idea. We are just rediscovering an old idea.

Acts 2:46-47

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

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It makes sense, doesn't it.

Through small groups meeting in homes....

- Our need for relationship with our family can be met.
- Our need for physical help from our family can be met.
- Our need for encouragement to our faith from our family can be met.
- Our need for support for our mission from our family can be met.

Through small groups meeting in homes, our need to be loved can be met. We can all be a part of meeting the need for love in others.

What we are doing here this morning in this service is good.

- Lost people looking for God don't know where our small groups meet. They go to church campuses when they search for God or search for God's people.
- Worshipping in song together encourages our faith.
- Preaching encourages our faith and preachers can give us vision for the church.
- Uniting in prayer together can be very powerful.

But God is saying His church can exist and thrive without these large gatherings. He says my church can exist and thrive if its only meetings are small groups meeting in homes. His

reasoning is simple. Through these groups we can love one another. This is the main thing our heavenly Father wants for His family right now. He wants us to love another.

If you are leading one of our groups, this is not going to happen in God's family if all you are doing is facilitating a meeting once a week.

As a leader....

- You need to be connecting with your members every day
We don't live in the same community, but technology makes this possible.
- You need to be meeting at other times with your members during the week
We don't live in the same communities, but transportation makes this possible.
- You need to be connecting your members in ministry to one another and to others as you discover needs.

This is especially true for the least and the lowest in your group.

Leaders, you need to model for your members what it means to love one another. Church, you need to bring great joy to our heavenly father and be family; follow your leaders and love one another.

This worldwide crisis did not catch our heavenly Father by surprise. He is sovereign! He has a divine purpose for everything that happens. He either causes things to happen or He allows things to happen. Whether He causes it or allows it He always knows what is going to happen and has a purpose that He is accomplishing through it.

What is our heavenly Father's purpose for the coronavirus crisis?

Hebrews 12:25-29

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven,

26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."

27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

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- He is shaking the economic foundations of the world.

He is showing the world how fragile they are. He wants the people of the world to know they are not in control. He is in control. He wants the people of the world to humble themselves and submit to His control of their lives. He is Jesus the messiah!

- He is shaking the ecclesiastical foundations of His church.

I have no idea if we will be meeting next Sunday for this service. But I know this for certain. Our heavenly Father wants us to love one another. This cannot occur by live streaming a

service once a week. It can only occur by small groups of believers gathering in homes and then caring for one another during the week.

Most local churches are not prepared for this crisis. God is using this crisis to cause Pastors to rethink their strategy for their ministry.

God is working to prepare the church for what is coming!

I believe this current shaking will end. I don't believe this crisis is apocalyptic. The world will go back to normal. This coronavirus will be controlled and become a part of our culture. The economic foundations of the world will stop shaking. At some point health authorities and government authorities will tell us to go back to our normal lives and not live in fear. Most of the world will go back to believing the lie that they are in control.

I am sorry to say that many Pastors and local churches will go back to normal. The ecclesiastical foundations of the church will stop shaking. Many Pastors will not listen to why God is shaking the ecclesiastical foundations of the church. They will do a disservice to their people because they will not lead their people to establish and focus on what is the only essential ministry of the church. The temperature of their churches love for one another will remain lukewarm.

My only question is will we be one of them? Church, I will do everything in my power as a Pastor to keep that from happening. I will tell you over and over again that our heavenly Father wants us to love one another. I will tell you over and over again that the best way to accomplish that is through our small groups meeting in homes. I will tell you over and over again that this ministry is the only essential ministry in our church.

Will we cooperate with our heavenly Father? Will we love one another in a way that will most honor Him? Will we yield to His purpose for this current shaking?

If you will yield will you pray this prayer to our heavenly Father?

Heavenly Father, thank you for being my Father. Thank you for your great love for me. Jesus, you are Lord. You are Lord of the heavens and the earth. You are Lord of my life. You are the Lord of your family, the church.

Heavenly Father, I surrender to your purpose for my life. You want me to love your family. Help me love your family the way you want me to love them. Show me where to go and I will go. Show me who to love and I will love them. Use me to love your family the way you want me to love them. Use us to reach others so they can have the hope that you have given us.

Heavenly Father, because of your great love me and your family, we have nothing to fear. Your love casts out all fear. Thank you for giving us an eternal hope that no one can take from us. Thank you for giving your life for us so that we can have that hope.

In Jesus Name!